

# Southport Back in Time



with Andrew Brown

**A** POWERFUL new exhibition exploring the impact that the Windrush generation has had on our community has opened in Southport.

Windrush: Our Story, Our Community is available to see at The Atkinson on Lord Street, Southport town centre, after its launch on Saturday (September 7) and is open until Saturday, January 18.

Admission is free.

Curated by the Southport African Caribbean Heritage Association (SACHA), it celebrates the Windrush generation and their legacy.

Did you know that the Windrush generation made a significant impact on our local community?

Do you know the impact of the Windrush Scandal?

This project celebrates the contribution of the Windrush generation and their descendants to our community, from healthcare to arts and culture.

Visitors will be able to hear first-hand accounts of their experiences and challenges.

Meet the people behind the stories, through photography by Ean Flanders and video by Christopher Chadwick.

This thought-provoking exhibition explores the Windrush journey, and showcases original material borrowed from the participants.

It has been put together through SACHA, and SACHA co-founder Gemma Collins, who issued an appeal earlier this year to all Windrush generations and their descendants for their

Gemma has been busy since then putting together oral history interviews and items from the period of 1948-1971 to celebrate the stories, memories, and legacies of the Windrush Generation.

It was an opportunity to preserve and share the remarkable history of the Windrush Generation in Merseyside and for their voices to be heard.

Last year, SACHA organised a special fun day event in the Town Hall Gardens in Southport to celebrate the 75th Windrush anniversary.

It included a ceremony which saw the Windrush flag raised above Southport Town Hall for the first time.

Last year marked 75 years since the arrival of the Empire Windrush ship from the West Indies to Britain in 1948, a year which coincided with the birth of the NHS. The two events were very much linked.

Gemma said: "Windrush Day is celebrated on 22nd June every year - the date the HMT Empire Windrush arrived in the UK.

"As descendants of the Windrush Generations we feel it is really important for our local community to acknowledge and to see the importance of the contributions that have been made by people from the Windrush generations and what they did to help rebuild this country - their mother country - and to build the National Health Service in the years after the Second World War.

"My grandparents, Charles and Ruth Collins, were part of the Windrush generation when they came to the UK from Barbados in 1957 and 1958.

"My father, Michael Collins, arrived

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## Windrush stories told in exhibition

here when he was 13 years old in 1967.

"My grandfather came first, on his own by plane. It must have been very daunting! My grandmother came the following year by ship.

"My eldest Auntie came first then with the remaining children followed.

"My Grandfather was a Ticket conductor for London Transport.

"My grandfather and grandmother then went into work at the Prince Of Wales Hotel in Southport, and then at Mullards Factory in Crossens.

"Tragically, my grandmother died from breast cancer at just 36 years of age. My aunt, and grandad, became the ones looking after the children.

"My Dad experienced racism on many occasions after arriving here as a teenager, especially at school from teachers and pupils.

"It was a huge shock for people arriving from the Caribbean, who were proud Commonwealth citizens, excited about coming to the Motherland.

"They expected to be welcomed when they arrived, but that was not the case.

"Finding rented accommodation and buying properties was very difficult and neighbours showed their

distaste overtly.

"You may be aware of the signs saying 'No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs'.

"These celebrations are about recognising that people were coming to help to rebuild the country in post-war Britain, they were coming to staff the new NHS and to make it the success that it was, but that in many cases they weren't always given a great welcome."

This was followed by the Windrush Scandal.

It began in 1948 with people who were wrongly detained and threatened with deportation and in a number of cases wrongly deported from the UK by the Home Office.

Many of those affected had been born British subjects and had arrived in the UK before 1973, particularly from Caribbean countries.

Gemma said: "Many people know about the Windrush Scandal, but many don't realise how much it has affected people so close to home.

"Now is the right time to acknowledge what happened and to celebrate the people of the Windrush generation and to thank them for what they achieved.

"We want the event to be for people in the Windrush generation to be able

to say 'someone has finally noticed us'. Nothing has ever really been acknowledged about just what they achieved, and it is about time that changed."

The Windrush generation ran from the first ships arriving in 1948 through to the early 1970s.

After World War II, many Caribbean people migrated to North America and Europe, especially to the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, and the Netherlands.

As a result of the losses during the war, the British government began to encourage mass immigration to fill shortages in the labour market.

Many West Indians were attracted by better prospects in what was often referred to as the mother country.

The first ships to carry large groups of West Indian people from Jamaica to the United Kingdom were the SS Ormond, which docked at Liverpool on 31 March 1947 with 241 passengers and the SS Almanzora, which arrived at Southampton on December 21 with 200 passengers. However, it was the voyage of HMT Empire Windrush in June the following year which was to become well-known.

Empire Windrush arrived with a

● Pioneering footballers Arthur Wharton (top) and Viv Anderson are celebrated in the exhibition

group of 802 migrants at the port of Tilbury, near London, on 22nd June 1948. Empire Windrush was a troopship en route from Australia to England via Kingston, Jamaica. An advertisement had appeared in a Jamaican newspaper offering cheap transport on the ship for anybody who wanted to travel to the United Kingdom.

Unlike the previous two ships, the arrival of the Windrush received a great deal of media attention and was reported by newspaper reporters and Newsreel cameras.

Windrush: Our Story, Our Community is at The Atkinson on Lord Street, Southport town centre, until Saturday, January 18, 2025. Admission is free. Open Monday-Saturday 10am-4pm. Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays.

**Andrew Brown** runs the Stand Up For Southport Facebook group.

For details email [mediaandrewbrown@gmail.com](mailto:mediaandrewbrown@gmail.com). You can also #StandUpForSouthport